



Massachusetts National Guard

Public Affairs

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News Release

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Dec. 12, 2006

Happy Birthday National Guard

MILFORD, Mass. -- The Massachusetts National Guard will mark its 370th birthday tomorrow, along with all Guard members worldwide.

On Dec. 13, 1636, the first regiments of what would become the National Guard were organized from militia companies in the towns surrounding Boston. These regiments still serve today in the Massachusetts National Guard as the 101st Engineers, based in Whitinsville; 101st Field Artillery, based in Brockton; 181st Infantry, based in Worcester; and 182nd Cavalry, based in Melrose.

Since then, 19 generations of National Guard citizen-soldiers progressed from swords, pikes, and unwieldy matchlocks, to today's M-4 rifles, night vision devices and unmanned aerial vehicles.

Elements of the 101st Engineers, 181st Infantry and 182nd Cavalry are currently deployed in Kosovo in support of peacekeeping efforts there and will recognize the Guard's birthday with a cake-cutting ceremony at Camp Bondsteel.

The history of the National Guard is woven tightly into the fabric of American history. National Guard soldiers and airmen were present at every conflict in this nation's history, from the shot heard 'round the world to the Global War on Terrorism.

The Massachusetts National Guard, for example, mobilized an estimated 100,000 soldiers for the Revolutionary War, 114,000 for the Civil War, 18,000 for World War I and 12,000 for World War II. In all of these conflicts, Guard members played a major role.

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Supporting today's Global War on Terrorism is the most comprehensive effort by the National Guard since World War II. Since Sept. 11, 2001, more than 7,300 members of the Massachusetts National Guard have served on federal active duty, 4,700 of whom served overseas in places including Afghanistan, Bosnia, Cuba, Iraq, Kosovo and Kuwait.

Through it all, the National Guard continued to support its communities during emergencies at home. Roughly 5,000 Massachusetts National Guard Soldiers and Airmen served in Massachusetts since Sept. 11, 2001, assisting with the protection of lives and property during the airport security missions, five Independence Day celebrations, five Boston Marathons, the Democratic National Convention, the Blizzard of 2005, the flooding along the North Shore this past spring, and other missions.

Massachusetts sent 600 Guard members to join with 50,000 National Guard Soldiers and Airmen from across the country to assist with Hurricane Katrina relief efforts.

Just like their predecessors, who stood at the North Bridge in Concord 1775, today's Guard members are true patriots. "It is the Guard's birthday ... but it is the citizens of this nation who receive a gift of men and women ... who sacrifice their personal and professional lives to be ready when called, whether for conflict overseas or disaster at home," said Brig. Gen. Oliver J. Mason Jr., the Adjutant General of the Massachusetts National Guard.

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